(c) whether his Ministry has any cooperative programme including funding and grants to NGOs that are running programmes for primary education for children of urban Poor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRIMATI D. PURANDESWARI): (a) and (b) Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), which is being implemented in a partnership of the Central and State Governments for universalizing elementary education, focuses on all disadvantaged children including deprived urban children. Opening of new schools in deficit areas, strenthening of existing schools and flexible schooling facilities for street children, dropouts, older 'never enrolled children', are some of the specific interventions to enhance access to elementary education for urban children.

(c) SSA encourages involvement of NGOs in various aspects of programme including running of programmes for urban deprived children.

Drop out of children

1379. SHRI SURENDRA LATH:
MS. PRAMILA BOHIDAR:

Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that not even 20 out of 100 students enrolled in Class I are reaching up to class X;

(b) if so, the steps Government are taking to remove factors behind such drop-out rates; and;

(c) the results achieved so far from such efforts?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI MD. ALI ASHRAF FATMI): (a) As per the provisional statistics for the year 2003-04, the drop-out rate in Classes I—X is 62.7%.

(b) and (c) A multi-pronged approach has been adopted under SSA for reducing drop-out rates. One set of interventions relates to strengthening of primary and upper primary schools and improving the quality of education through improvement in schools infrastructure, recruitment of additional teachers, annual school grants, regular training

of teachers, introduction of teaching practices that make class rooms more joyful and attractive, regular academic support to teachers etc. On the other had, several interventions aim at improving the demand for schooling through community mobilization, special intervention for enrolment and retention of vulnerable groups of children including girls and children of weaker sections. Measures are also being undertaken to strengthen the accountability of the schools system towards parents and the community, The Mid-Day Meal Scheme that provides a cooked meal to all children of primary schools and alternative education centres has also helped in checking drop-out rates.

Free textbooks are provided to all girls and all SC and ST students up to the elementary stage. Under the National Programme for Education of Girls of the Elementary Level (NPEGEL), additional resources are provided to 3164 educationally backward blocks for interventions of community mobilization, bridge course for out-of-school girls, strengthening of model cluster schools, gender sensitization of teachers etc. to promote retention of girls in primary and upper primary schools.

Assistance to States under mid-day meal scheme

1380. SHRI RAMDAS AGARWAL: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have decided to increase the Central assistance to States and Union Territories for the Centrally sponsored national programme on mid-day meal scheme;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether all the State Governments/NGOs giving mid-day meals are complying with the norms of mid-day meal scheme;

(d) if not, the reasons therefor;

(e) whether Government have taken note of the complaints received in the implementation of the scheme; and

(f) if so, the action taken by Government thereon?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRIMATI D. PURANDESWARI): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The Central Government, in June, 2006 has decided to enhance the cooking cost norm from existing Re. 1 per child per school